



New England Bridge Conference of the American Contract Bridge League

Minutes
Executive Committee Meeting
Gala Regional
Best Western Hotel, Marlboro, MA
May 21, 2022

Officers: Curtis Barton, President; Mark Oettinger - Vice President; Joseph Brouillard, Treasurer; Carolyn Weiser, Secretary

Unit Representatives: EMBA – Saul Agranoff, Paul Harris; CMBA – Denise Bahosh; CBA -Sandy DeMartino (Sonja Smith alt.) Frances Schneider (M. Wavada alt.); RIBA - (M. Williams absent); NHBA – David Lawrence; VBA – 0; MBA – Daniel Morgenstern; WMBA – Peter Samsel

Absent: Mike Wavada, Sonja Smith, (CBA); Marshall Williams (RIBA); Steve Ackerman (VBA)

Invited Guests: Mark Aquino – Regional Director, Lois DeBlois – NABC Co-chair, Sally Kirtley – Tournament Manager, Peter Marcus – DIC, Susan Miguel – I/N Coordinator, Bart Bussink – NAP/GNT Coordinator

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 PM.

President's Opening remarks – President Curtis Barton

President Barton gave a special thank you to Peter Marcus, Sally Kirtley, and Susan Miguel for all their work that made the Gala possible and such a success.

Secretary's Report - Minutes, Executive Committee Meeting, February 17, 2022- On-line

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the minutes from the February 17, 2022 meeting as sent.

Treasurer's Report – Joseph Brouillard

The Statement of Financial Position shows a small increase over 2021. The NABC Fund is doing well. The District is currently in good shape.

The Operating Income Statement shows little activity except for the payment of the Secretaries Stipend for 2021. We should make a profit from the GNTs. D. Morgenstern asked about the GNTs for 2021. Treasurer Brouillard answered that the GNTs made money last year. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented.

S. DeMartino asked about the NABC Fund. Treasurer Brouillard answered that it is in outstanding shape. He added that the Annual IRS Form 990 has been filed. The District is in good shape now. This tournament appears to be a success. In the future, we need to be judicious in our tournaments. Pre-covid only Warwick and Mansfield made money. The rest were losses or break-even.

S. Agranoff asked if this site is a “one-off.” S. Kirtley answered that Mansfield has gone downhill. There were complaints about the playing area. President Barton stated that we have contracted with Southbridge in November. The only way we could cancel the site due to covid, without penalty, was to give them a new contract. He continued that there was a complaint about fire exits here. S. Kirtley will investigate when the Sales Group returns. It is currently all out with Covid. The sites will be described in the Tournament Committee report.

Tournament Manager’s Report - Sally Kirtley- see above

Tournament / Scheduling Committee Report - Mark Oettinger

For the near term, the number of tournaments and their length is the first concern. We need to decide whether they should be 5-days and ramp up to 6 and whether they should start on Tuesday. There was much discussion within the committee. We need to accommodate those who are still working as well as acknowledging that the majority of our members are retired. For Warwick, we currently are contracted for Tuesday through Sunday. Sally will try to change our current contract for Tuesday through Saturday. President Barton added that if we give the hotel back Saturday evening and Sunday they will be able to rent the space. S. Kirtley noted that the dates would be August 30 - September 3. We would defer the schedule to Peter Marcus. As of now, we do not know whether we can replicate the Gala format. We would go for a scaled down, normal format, if we cannot. Perhaps we will be able to do so in Southbridge (November). S. DeMartino noted that the players like to repeat what was done before. Thursday through Sunday is a great length. D. Lawrence asked if we would try to make all the tournaments the same length. (answer) Yes.

(P. Marcus) For Warwick, we have a contract. We will see if we can negotiate. All of this was discussed at the T/SC meeting. Please listen to the TSC. We have a long record of innovative and proven successful tournaments schedules. We developed the Mine, KIKO, the EGG. We have lots of experience and success in this District.

(S. Agranoff) If the tournament ends on Saturday, there are people who expect to play Saturday and Sunday.

(P. Marcus) Sunday is always our smallest day. Tuesday is the next smallest. Thursday and Friday are our best.

(J. Brouillard) Saturday and Sunday of Labor day weekend are always significantly down.

(RD Aquino) We can revisit the schedule if the ACBL approves this format again. Which site is the best for this type of an event (Gala)?

(S. Kirtley) We have a contract in Southbridge in November, 15-20. They have been sticky about changes.

(B. Busnick) Does this mean that the Swiss would be Saturday? (answer) Yes.

(P. Marcus) Our philosophy has always been to have a pairs and a team game every day. One is flighted and the other is open. We would like to bring back the KIKO. We felt that attendance here would be small and we would not have the table count to do both. As time goes on and attendance increases we want to add KO's, which would be KIKOs Soloway format. Until attendance grows sufficiently we will not be able to have a more classic format. No one wants to play in a 3-4 table Flight A or a 7 team, round robin. The schedules will be developed by Sue (Miguel) and I and Mark (Oettinger) and Curtis (Barton).

Mark Oettinger -

We will return to Warwick August 30 to September 4. The Harvest will be in Southbridge. We are considering cancelling the Senior Regional. The situation for the GNTs is in flux. Our Director (D. Metcalf) has recommended that the night games be reduced to 18 boards as they go so late.

(S. Kirtley) If I play at night I want to play a full 24 boards. Also, why is the Open Pairs only 24 boards, not 27. (answer) We wanted to simplify things for this tournament.

(D. Metcalf) We could do a test and try a speedball. General discussion followed.

(P. Marcus) I think 20-22 is best. All games are under discussion (by the ACBL). The Masterpoints are affected once you get to 18.

(D. Morgenstern) If we cancel the Seniors we lose them. General Discussion followed regarding the cancellation of the Senior Regional.

(P. Marcus) If we don't hold the Seniors in 2023 we can bring them back in 2024 and use Covid as the reason.

District Director's Report – Mark Aquino

The ACBL Board has been busy. There are discussion as to the best ways to save face-to-face bridge. There is a huge overhead at Horn Lake due to the IT budget. On-line bridge has been financially fantastic for the ACBL. Management is concerned with the bottom line and support on-line bridge because of its low overhead. This is counter to what we believe and support in District 25. The meetings are long. We are having difficulty adjusting the masterpoints. Changes take a long time as the system is long and somewhat convoluted. Once the Masterpoint Committee comes out with a decision, it goes to the Advisory Council where it is reviewed. It takes a long time to make changes in MP awards for on-line and F-F. The stated position is that there is support for F-F bridge, but as yet the necessary changes have not been made. The Advisory Council sees 18 boards as the norm, There is a motion that all games, on-line and F-F will be treated the same. Eighteen Boards will become the norm and 24 boards will be upgraded. Twelve board games will be allowed. Discussion followed.

We (the ACBL) are steadily losing members. For the first time in decades that we are under 140,000 members. Today was great. Supporting F-F bridge is not easy. It took lots of hard work behind the scene by Peter Marcus, Sol Weinstein, and Joe Jones to get this approved.

(P. Marcus) The ACBL gave permission for this format for this tournament. It is technically illegal. There are rules about the number of events and the number of strats that we can have: 3 events and 3 strats. In 2014 the EGG introduced 3 events with 2 strats each. This became the now standard 2-2-2. This event is a 3-3-3: Open – Gold Rush Graduates – Non-LMs. I foresee that it will be adopted everywhere within three years.

(RD M. Aquino) This will be reviewed Monday. As will the policies for on-line. Effective July 1- December 31 they will suspend special games with pigmented points on line, except for NAP games in June, July and August. On-line Regionals have been presented as cost advantage to the ACBL but the additional IT costs because of additional hiring will cost more than \$15,000. The Finance Committee wants to have on line events because it provides revenue. We will review a proposal for a sharing with the Districts. I will suggest that they do this first and that they get input from the Presidents Group. D-7 has put in a proposal. I want to give NABC committees the right to run NABC Fund games on line. Providence asked for this and were turned down.

M.. Aquino shared a number of detailed proposals with the Executive Committee that were discussed at a 5 hour long online ACBL BOD meeting and would be voted on at the May 23rd online meeting. One of the proposals that looks promising is to reduce the maximum Masterpoint formula for a virtual club game from 4.0 to 2.4.

(S. Miguel) They should enforce the policies on ALL virtual clubs. Currently they are letting bad actors operate with impunity.

(P. Marcus) Please ask the members of the Board to make sure that the directors they choose to run on-line events are competent to run those events. General discussion followed. RD Aquino ended by praising S. Miguel for the number of C-flight teams D-25 had. There were 50 on-line flight C teams and 22 Flight B. (from D-25) D-25 had more tables than the next 4 District together.

NAP/GNT – Bart Bussink – Coordinator

Thanks to P. Marcus who made the On-line NAPs and GNTs work. They ran flawlessly. He helped me get up to speed. S. Miguel was unbelievable. We had 12 A, 22B and 50C teams compete.

Old Business-

New Business-

NABC – Joe Brouillard and Lois DeBlois

I have a special award for P. Marcus for all the work he did to make this tournament possible. In appreciation for all the work Peter had done, I bought him a special gift that I know he has always wanted. I would like to present it tonight. I bought him a Bugatti from the District. Unfortunately, it is a toy model, but the sentiment is the same.
(Presentation)

The Providence NABC will use a 10 & 3 schedule but the ACBL only provides hospitality in the evening. There was zero hospitality for the rest of the players in Austin and Reno. These players will not get morning hospitality. D - 25 will provide an afternoon snack during the 2nd session.

We have raised money in sponsorships. Every day has been sold. We tried to get Fidelity and BC/BS to sponsor, but we were unsuccessful. We applied for a grant from the Providence Tourism Bureau and were successful in getting a grant.

The ACBL does not support any on-line partnerships. We have a page on our website for both teams and pairs. It will be taken down as soon as the event begins.

Waterfire will be held July 16. We were to be one of several sponsors but a major sponsor withdrew. There is still be a Waterfire but in the basin only. There will be a reception on July 16 at the Convention and Visitors Bureau patio.

(S. Agranoff) I want to make sure that Bob Bertoni's family will be invited. (yes)

The ACBL used to have a Wednesday dinner and a VIP reception. We budgeted \$10,000 for the VIP reception. We decided that rather than have a dinner we would use the \$7500 credit from the ACBL for the Waterfire Reception. We were asked by Providence to provide 2M in liability insurance for the event. I have received an estimate of \$175 to \$280.

Registration Gifts and Prizes – We intended to give a USB light but we were required to use ACBL approved vendors. They could not match the price we got, so we will be giving tumblers instead as a registration gift and Section Tops will get a pen and flashlight. Purse hook and note pad with a pen. All prizes are within the ACBL allowances.

Covid Protocols – Vaccinations will be required. If the CDC covid spread rates are medium or low we will not have to require masks. If they are high, masks will be required. The day's designation will be printed in the Bulletin every day.

Adam Parrish has written a play about 2 professional bridge players. It is not a sponsored event. It will run at a nearby theatre from July 20-23. There will be a charge at the theatre.

S. DeMartino asked about the opening night festivities. (Answer) They are handled by the ACBL.

Parking- We got a special rate of \$10.00 at the Convention garage and \$20 for overnight parking. "Chasers" will be given to eligible players that will activate the discount when exiting the garage.

The ACBL is scheduled for its final visit on June 2.

Website: The ACBL wanted us to take down our website. We were allowed to keep it up after they had copied it and put it on their website. P. Marcus made a motion at the Board of Governors (Advisory Council) to allow the NABC Committee to do their own website. All we got in the Bulletin was one line. The ACBL does not want to work with the Districts.

GNT Stipends – The proposal for the GNT Stipend was sent to the members of the Executive Committee. After a brief discussion, a motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept Proposal 2. ([4 teams, \$300 pp] for first place and \$900 [2 teams, \$225 pp] for second.).

Mike Wavada's Pending Resignation - President Barton: Mike Wavada has announced that he will be resigning from his D-25 positions as of December 31, 2022. Each member of the Executive Committee received the documents relating to his activities. It is unlikely that we could ever find one person to do them all and they will probably be split between several individuals. We will publicize the positions. We are asking that anyone who has any suggestions relate them to me.

(F. Schneider) suggested that M. Wavada has the ability to send this to everyone in the District.

Discussion followed. C. Barton- I will ask Mike to post the information when he returns.

Sponsorship – The Sponsorship concept was initiated by Past President J, Mahoney. I will ask him to head this up again. Once we get a schedule we can then begin to try to get sponsors. We tried to get sponsors for the whole event in the past, but this was unsuccessful.

Going Cashless- The idea of going cashless will not work well with Canada because of the system. It is fair to say that well will never refuse money.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:25.

Respectfully submitted:

Carolyn Weiser
Secretary, District 25.